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**Mauricio Gaston Institute**

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**for Latino Community Development**

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**Bilingual Education: A Research Agenda  
for the 21st Century**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When Lyndon Johnson signed the Bilingual Education Act into law in 1968, the United States made its first admission that government must play a role in meeting the educational needs of students with limited or no English proficiency. Politically, these students could be ignored no longer. Significantly, however, the law did not require any native-language instruction in meeting students needs.

Massachusetts became the first state with a law promoting bilingual education, Chapter 71A, in 1971. That, as well as the landmark U.S. Supreme Court *Lau v. Nichols* case in 1974, became the foundation for a bridge between a dominant culture and a tremendously diverse Hispanic culture. The law, however, was more about transition to English than dual-language capability.

Even today, there is so little understanding or ownership by non-bilingual educators of bilingual students' needs that seemingly "hanging a shingle outside the door" has been sufficient license to call a program bilingual. Any program that enrolls limited-English-proficient students often becomes the definition of bilingual education for federal funding and research purposes.

Bilingual classes have been isolated from standard curriculum classes. Even with the move toward clustering, we still have the "bilingual cluster" — all of this in spite of a Chapter 71A mandate for integration in non-academic subject areas. In addition, we in Massachusetts have not yet created any testing instrument for children enrolled in bilingual education programs. That means we cannot yet judge how schools or programs, over time, are improving bilingual instruction.

This paper addresses these shortfalls and calls for new directions in research in order to shape a public policy that promotes truly bilingual education.

The changes in teacher certification in Massachusetts hold hopeful signs, including replacing education as a field of undergraduate study with a liberal arts major that usually includes a foreign language requirement. However, regular education teachers are not required to complete any courses for certification or continuing education that address needs of limited-English-proficient students. This must change and there must be incentives for all teachers to develop their own second-language capability. There is ample lip-service for the value of intercultural training for teachers, yet such courses remain optional electives for entering the profession.

The continuing public policy debate involves language and culture as assets. The author argues that bilingual education is viewed primarily as remedial or compensatory — philosophically a catch-up operation. In addition, few schools seem to acknowledge that Hispanic children bring a rich cultural legacy with potential for the entire school community.

The ideal? A system where teachers, administrators and parents develop and share a vision for their school that draws on the uniqueness of that community of individuals. Because teachers have articulated a shared vision of how children learn, including how they learn in two languages, high expectations for children's achievement and teaching approaches are consistent throughout the program. Teachers and administrators are conversant with the latest research and curriculum developments within and beyond bilingual education and apply findings to their own classroom. Bilingual students are taught at least one block in the native language and one class in which they will use English. Teachers do what they do best in their best language. Integration occurs among all students, not just those in the top English group.

Clearly, high quality teachers and home-school collaboration are essential to all effective schools. In addition, effective two-way bilingual programs must provide long-term treatment, optimal input in two languages, focus on academic subjects, integration of language arts with curriculum, separation of languages for instruction, additive bilingual environment, balance of language groups, sufficient use of minority language, opportunity for speech production, administrative support and an empowerment objective of instruction. And, ongoing professional development must be at the core of a school system's agenda.



Quality education encompasses a view of children as active and engaged learners, a view diametrically opposed to the philosophical underpinning of transitional bilingual education, which is quick, compensatory and remedial education.

The author's agenda for necessary research includes a focus on:

- the value of in-depth cultural learning on Hispanic achievement;
- how teacher preparation affects students' achievement when enrolled in two-way as well as transitional bilingual programs;
- what testing and evaluation methods are possible and work for bilingual educators, especially regarding school strengths and weaknesses, individual students' progress and proficiency;
- new assessment tools that will uncover the different aspects in linguistic intelligence in two languages;
- what kinds of parent involvement and training positively impact on children learning in two languages;
- how school governance, including schools created with a distinct purpose, affects children learning in two languages;
- what factors inhibit and often prevent successful bilingual programs from being replicated, despite their popularity;
- a way to address equity issues for bilingual and special need students in a within-city-limits-school-choice plan that includes chartering and decommissioning of schools;
- the answer to how people learn a second language;
- why we still have such a shortage of quality literature in Spanish by Latino authors for children K-12.
- incentives and opportunities, such as summer institutes, for teachers and educational researchers to work together in development of state-of-the-art trade books, kits, children's magazines and curriculum units, to name a few.

The ultimate result needs to be an agenda for bilingual education in the next century that results from questioning and chronicling every aspect of how time and resources within a program, a school, and a school system are valued and used.



## INTRODUCTION

“I was looking at the stars last night,” the student told her teacher. “What are they? Why do they shine? Do they burn out in the day?”

“Those are hard questions. You are not ready yet to study the stars. You wouldn’t understand what you are looking at. I have never taken astronomy myself. Astronomy is a very difficult subject, based on the previous study of science and mathematics. You must study and pass elementary, junior and high school science and mathematics before you can answer those questions. I think there may be a chapter on stars in high school. Besides, you are failing science now because you don’t pay attention and you don’t understand magnets. Reread your science textbook. Also, it is important that you go to bed early so that you get plenty of rest for your school studies. You should be reading at night, not looking at the stars, if you want to succeed in school. I will speak to your mother about this.”

We wince reading this hypothetical exchange. Even as we read, we anticipate the preferred response on the part of this teacher. There are resources, we think to ourselves — books, kits, the Boston Museum of Science, the Planetarium. Here is a girl excited about science! Build on that interest, provide her resources to dig deeper, connect it to her other studies. Astronomy is not too difficult for a child. The preferred answer — an invitation to uncover the curriculum together — seems obvious to us. What if she had asked the monolingual teacher the same questions in Spanish? We know. This student was too bright to make a fool of herself; she wouldn’t even have bothered to ask. But the questions and the imagination behind the questions still would have been there.

This paper begins with this imaginary exchange between a child and a teacher because in developing a research agenda for bilingual education in the 21st century, we must never lose sight of the torrent of those important, fragile exchanges between students and teachers. This particular exchange was primarily a lost opportunity, and an experience of frustration for the child, one strand of a web that entangled rather than a net that offered support and valued children’s thinking. Bilingual educational research and instruction, which must include native language and English language instruction, must never be separated from good educational thinking and practice.

Because advocates of bilingual education have had to struggle so hard to win and maintain any native language instruction, and have simultaneously defended their programs from attacks from English Only and other groups, they have been tempted to protect the status quo with its widely differing programs and quality. Even within the educational establishment, there is still so little understanding, investment or ownership by non-bilingual educators of bilingual students’ needs, that seemingly “hanging a shingle outside the door” has been sufficient license to call a program bilingual. Any program that enrolled limited-English-proficient students became the definition of bilingual education for federal funding and research purposes. Bilingual education in this definition has become whom you serve rather than how or what you teach — the proverbial tail wagging the dog. Since all bilingual students are round pegs who must be squashed into square holes within three years regardless of the fit, this approach has run counter to prevailing research and understanding of the value of developmentally appropriate, child-centered, multicultural education. Without a standard, the resulting wide variance in quality should have come as no surprise and has made comparative research increasingly difficult. Studies focused on exit data rather than the quality of the bilingual program itself, or the quality of the program in which the student was transitioned.

Like its cousin special education, bilingual education sidestepped the issue of accountability by exempting students from standardized tests in their native language or English. Strategically, despite my reservations about the limited value of standardized tests, I believe this was a serious error and will explore the ramifications in this paper. Sometimes instructional practices that may not have been as effective, regardless of the language of instruction, continued behind the shingle of bilingual education even though there was nothing intrinsically bilingual or educationally sound about them. In the future, we

must keep directing the standards back to sound educational theory, research, professional development and practices.

Bilingual education, as a field of professional study, is relatively new. Research in the field has followed an existing political agenda rather than shaped a future one. The study of how children learn, including how children learn a first and second language, is at once totally political, and totally non-political. Political winds determine whether society values how children learn, particularly how limited-English-proficient Hispanic children learn. For example, is there money allocated to pay for such research? It is non-political in that the kind of research most needed is insulated from those political crosswinds. How? Either it is longitudinal like the High-Scope study on the impact of quality early-childhood programs on low-income children's later achievement or it is basic research on language acquisition, including second-language acquisition, which crosses disciplines in service of developing theory that stands up to the scrutiny of practice.

Many educators within bilingual education have long believed that Hispanic children were smart and capable and should retain and even expand their native language proficiency in addition to learning English. However, these practitioners, with their widely differing programs and populations, consistently have been measured for evaluation purposes by research studies that have asked the wrong question — the question of the quick transition to English. Instead of asking “How quickly can limited-English-proficient children learn English?” the question should be “How do students learn a second language?” and “What other factors combined with instruction in first language must we consider in program design?”

This paper calls for new directions in research in order to shape a public policy that promotes truly bilingual education. The paper draws attention to the aspects of quality programming that should be embedded in future research studies. It espouses language and culture as assets, rather than handicaps, and addresses the impact of bilingual programs on desegregation goals. Accountability of teachers, administrators and students is addressed through review of entry and exit criteria as well as raising the standards of bilingual education and teacher training. Since attitude and school-climate strongly affect student achievement, school programs that promote multilingualism by expanding bilingual education to native English-speakers will be spotlighted.

Much of the current research which purports to discredit bilingual education is irrelevant because it has asked the wrong question — the question shaped by a political rather than an educational public policy agenda. It is the question mainly of the speed by which a student develops the narrow skill of decoding English — flapping wings as opposed to flight. Before turning to the questions I believe more researchers in bilingual education should be asking in the future, let us review how the limited question came to dominate center stage in the political and public arena.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Research is the shadow of public policy. Public policy is shaped by history and aspiration. When Lyndon Johnson signed the Bilingual Education Act into law in 1968, the United States made its first national admission that government had the responsibility to play a role in meeting the particular educational needs of students with limited or no English proficiency. Politically, these students could be ignored no longer. Significantly, the law did not require the use of any native language instruction in meeting these students' needs. Like the student in the fanciful conversation, limited-English-proficient students would be asked to limit their learning to what the teachers already knew; bilingual education could mean monolingual teachers taught limited-English-proficient students. Even as late as 1977-1978, an American Institute for Research (AIR) study acknowledged that 49.6 percent of "bilingual teachers" who were interviewed "admitted they lacked proficiency in their students' mother tongue" (Crawford, 1989). Embedded in the 1968 federal statute, Title VII, was a view of students who needed to be stuffed like sausages with a filling of English; limited-English-proficient students were empty casings, deprived, in need of remediation and compensatory education.

This view was never universal. Santiago Polanco-Abreu, Puerto Rico's Congressional delegate, argued during the 1967 deliberations on the Bilingual Education Act:

I wish to stress that I realize the importance of learning English by Puerto Ricans and other minority groups living in the States. But I do not feel that our educational abilities are so limited and our educational vision so shortsighted that we must teach one language at the expense of another, that we must sacrifice the academic potential of thousands of youngsters in order to promote the learning of English, that we must jettison and reject ways of life that are not our own (Crawford, 1989).

Polanco-Abreu called for the establishment of programs that (a) would utilize two languages, English and the non-English mother tongue, in the teaching of the various school subjects, (b) would concentrate on teaching both English and the non-English mother tongue, and (c) would endeavor to preserve and enrich the culture and heritage of the non-English speaking student.

Nor was the view of utilizing only one language for instruction based on historical fact. According to Von Maltitz (1975):

The concept of teaching in two languages (or in a language other than English) is not a completely new idea in the history of education in the United States. Some bilingual public schools existed here before the Civil War and flourished in various places thereafter. In localities with heavy concentrations of German-speaking families, such as Cincinnati, Cleveland and Milwaukee, there were schools in which at least part of the curriculum was taught in German; in an earlier era, French was used in public schools in Louisiana and Spanish in New Mexico. But because bilingual education, or teaching in any language but English in public schools, did not conform to the melting-pot philosophy, it fell into disfavor and in many states was declared illegal. The resurgence of interest in bilingual teaching, which came about in the decade of the 1960s, was fostered by two factors: the growing determination of various ethnic minorities to maintain their ancestral languages and lifestyles and the schools' inability to educate many of the children from these ethnic groups when using a language that the pupils had not yet mastered as the only medium of instruction.

"Massachusetts became the first state to enact a law promoting bilingual education" (Crawford, 1989) with the passage in November 1971 of Chapter 71A Transitional Bilingual Education Law, which



permitted the use of native language instruction and delineated certification requirements for bilingual teachers. That law, as well as the landmark *Lau v. Nichols* case decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1974, became the foundation for a bridge between a dominant culture and a tremendously diverse Hispanic culture spanning two continents with roots to a third. Aspiration was the air parents, bilingual advocates and educators breathed from their side of the bridge.

In constructing the foundation, however, bilingual educators were working from an engineer design with a major flaw. Bilingual educators and advocates accepted that design, either because they thought it was the best that could pass the labyrinthine legislative process or because they thought the design best served the needs of Spanish-dominant children. The flaw was this: The bilingual law was predicated on the notion that it was a transitional program, even while there was lip service to dual language capability. This law was about getting Hispanic children onto and over the bridge as quickly as possible. The time on the bridge was to be limited to no more than three years. The gate arbitrarily dropped at the three-year mark, despite research evidence to the contrary that second-language acquisition takes five to seven years (Cummins, 1986; Hakuta, 1986; Collier and Thomas, 1989); students not on shore were left to sink or swim in the regular education classroom.

A drowning person will grab anything that floats, and Hispanic children in 1970 were drowning in an educational system indifferent, and more often hostile, to their needs, as documented by "The Way We Go to School," a report by the Task Force on Children Out of School. The bridge, even with its weaknesses, offered thousands of Hispanic children for the first time access to public education in their native language. Despite claims by the AIR study to the contrary, according to Hakuta (1986), the majority of these children fared better than their counterparts who did not have equivalent supports.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) argues in a 1987 report that "Rather than emphasize research that might give insights to teachers on effective classroom practices and on how they might help limited-English-proficient students, (policy makers have) expended... much energy on research of questionable quality and validity that asks, 'Has it worked?'" The simplistic question "Has it worked?" "ignores the complexity" of bilingual programs and "serves to fuel a divisive debate."

## THE MEANING OF TRULY BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Although my family was of modest means, I had a truly bilingual education in grades one through twelve in Peru. I learned to think, write, read and speak in both Spanish and English from native speakers of Spanish and English. My fifty-four classmates, who were a heterogeneous group ability-wise, all were expected to learn in Spanish and English. There was no choice or decision to be made on my part. Teachers had the expectation that all of us could learn to think and express ourselves in speech and writing in two languages. We did. More critically, we who were all native Spanish speakers, learned English to some purpose beyond rudimentary oral communication. When we read Shakespeare in high school, we read the original. At the same time, we studied Peruvian history and literature in Spanish. I studied Science in Spanish and Mathematics in English, crisscrossing concepts and vocabulary in two languages to make a tight weave. We did not travel back and forth across a bridge. Our entire school experience took place on the bridge. We camped out and made a home there, internalizing two languages so we would own them for their rest of our lives — the true meaning of language acquisition. The bridge was sturdy enough to support our aspirations to build a structure of our own design that would span and celebrate the roots of two cultures and two languages.

In this most fundamental sense, I felt entitled, from first grade, to possess a second language — not to replace my own but to enrich my life, my mind and opportunities. That sense of entitlement is entirely a question of school culture, expectations and the messages, including non-verbal ones, sent out by adults working with children. For me, school was a place to learn in two languages, and in the course of learning in two languages, I learned a great deal about two languages. In fact, I learned a third language in high school, as did most of my classmates.

What a different bridge we have built for most Hispanic children in Massachusetts than the one I was so fortunate to experience. The reasons why the current bridge is predicated on a temporary experience are obvious: lack of money and increasing hostility from certain well-organized factions within the dominant community. The bridge is shaky rather than strong.

We have a unique opportunity in public education, to redefine bilingual education. We start by first reframing the public policy questions and the research that explores, supports or refutes these questions. This unique opportunity is a result of the growing movement toward awarding parental choice in selecting public schools and the stunning world events of the last 30 years that have succeeded in bringing international issues from the dismantling of the Berlin Wall to the release of Nelson Mandela into the lives of ordinary Americans. There is a growing sentiment among English monolingual parents (African-American and Anglo) of school-age children, themselves shaped by an increasingly global village viewpoint, of the value of second-language instruction. Second-language instruction has become viewed as a desirable enrichment on the part of English-dominant middle class parents, just as music or art. This is a new and potentially powerful ally in an expanded coalition for genuine two-way language instruction.

Hispanic parents, as evidenced by the popularity and waiting lists at the handful of two-way language schools and programs in Massachusetts, remain eager to encourage their children to “camp out on the bridge” rather than be forced to one side or the other, perhaps risking in the process the loss of meaningful communication with parents at home.

## THE CONTINUING PUBLIC POLICY DEBATE

### Language as an Asset

“We have room for but one language in this country and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house,” argued President Theodore Roosevelt 75 years ago (Crawford, 1989). The debate of whether one must be English dominant to be a “true American” continues today.

Curiously, the same English-Only proponents that insist one must be able to read the U.S. Constitution in English to understand it, forget the link between the ideas of today’s democratic society, with its protection of the rights of the few from the trespass of the many, to early Greece and Rome — where English was a foreign tongue. These same English-Only proponents fail to acknowledge the Native American contribution to the Constitution; an acknowledgement made by Benjamin Franklin and other colonists who sought living examples of self-governing unions as they contemplated their break from England. “What made colonists American as opposed to English was their experience with the Indians,” according to Lyons who cites numerous instances of the Iroquois Confederacy influencing the development of the Constitution. The United States itself is predicated on ideas — not the English language manifestation of those ideas, however beautiful and powerful the words in the English language may be. As a country, we have never been defined by only one tongue. The words Massachusetts, Los Angeles, Baton Rouge, the Dakotas and many more remind us of the rich tongues of Spanish, French and of Native American tribes.

The glass as half empty rather than half full is aptly applied to how children with limited English proficiency are viewed within public education. Bilingual education is primarily viewed as a remedial or compensatory program — philosophically a catch-up operation — by school administrators and school committees. Even the labels with their implied sorting and ranking — regular education, bilingual education, vocational education and special education — serve to separate and fragment the delivery of services. Heaven help the student who crosses boundaries and is bilingual, special needs and a vocational student! That child will most certainly be relegated to the basement of a school building, the least well-lit place where special needs, vocational and bilingual classes are traditionally housed — effectively segregated and out of the way.

Administrative decisions have compounded these separations in larger systems, where often the principal does not view bilingual or special needs programs as within administrative responsibility. “They report to downtown.” Bilingual children and staff exist as best they can, misunderstood, tolerated but rarely embraced by the school community of which they are members.

### Culture as an Asset

Hispanic students often experience school as the “others”, the “outsiders.” Very few schools embrace and acknowledge that Hispanic children bring a rich cultural legacy with the potential to enrich the entire school community.

What is culture? The history and literature of a people, their life patterns from birth to death and from generation to generation. It is a people’s governance, music, art, science, dance, games, humor, customs, beliefs and rituals. Most dazzling, many dimensions of other cultures are accessible to the motivated, patient learner; I know this as a long-term observer of and participant in contemporary American culture.

Culture is vastly more than a people’s native foods and dress. Yet this is often the depth of exposure that bilingual children may have in their curriculum to their ancestors’ rich contributions to world culture. Mainstreamed to the regular classroom, “former bilingual students” may no longer have these native celebrations.



Von Maltitz (1975) notes:

Some of the differences between one ethnic group and another, of course, go much deeper than superficial variations in manners and habits. Underlying some of them are attitudes toward life and death, love and family relationships, concepts of time — not in the meaning of hours and minutes but in the larger sense. There are also different views concerning the way humans should conduct their lives, motivated by a competitive, acquisitive spirit or guided by an acceptance of what fate brings. The attitude toward land — humans' use of the earth — also varies. Teachers and school administrators need to understand all of these varied aspects of the cultural backgrounds of the pupils whose education is entrusted to them. A study of the cultural roots of the various segments of the American nation is considered to be an important part of the bilingual-bicultural movement in public education.

As the teacher (bilingual and regular education) role shifts to explorer and learner with students, an in-depth inquiry can be made together into the students' cultures. Just as Europeans cherish distinctly different traditions (Who would argue French culture is identical to Welsh or Hungarian cultures?), Hispanics celebrate a rich diversity of culture dating from ancient times.

Why in-depth? "As teachers, I think one major role is to undo rapid assumptions of understanding, to slow down closure, in the interest of breadth and depth, which attach our knowledge to the world in which we are called upon to use it," Duckworth (1987) writes in The Having of Wonderful Ideas and Other Essays on Teaching and Learning. Duckworth (1987) makes an eloquent, persuasive case for encouraging children to learn how to generate and then explore for answers to their own meaningful questions. Every child has meaningful questions about his or her culture and ancestry if we educators will only create classroom environments for such questions.

A student who spends time exploring an aspect of culture that holds his fascination is far beyond the experience of a parade of multi-ethnic banquets. How did the Mayans invent the idea of zero? How has geography shaped the history of Ecuador? What are the favorite fables of children from Chile? What role does music play in the daily life of Puerto Ricans? The questions are endless. Asking the students to generate the questions affirms their abilities as generators of valid questions; asking the students to research these substantive questions validates their own culture as worthy of serious inquiry and scholarship.

Researchers should be directed to study the impact of such in-depth cultural learning on Hispanic achievement. What difference does reading from an original Spanish literature-based program make? What barriers do teachers and administrators face in developing a culturally relevant curriculum in Spanish and English? How can school-family ties be strengthened when enlisting family resources for the serious study of the child's native culture?



### WHAT ENHANCES QUALITY IN BILINGUAL PROGRAMS?

“Good bilingual education is good education which happens to be in two languages,” argues Dr. Maria Brisk (1990). Good education has a seamless quality. All the pieces fit because there is an underlying shared purpose and theoretical framework for whole learning. Teachers make choices — select a book, plan a lesson, engage students in discourse — based on educational thought, not externally generated political or bureaucratic reasons. Students make choices — ask a question, explore an idea, work through a problem cooperatively — because they understand that they are validated as individuals. They also know that their best thinking and expression are expected, whether in language, music, art, or physically. Both the expression of ideas and feelings are at home in good education.

Teachers, administrators and parents develop and share a vision for their school that draws on the uniqueness of that community of individuals. Because teachers have articulated a shared vision of how children learn, including how they learn in two languages, high expectations for children’s achievement and teaching approaches are consistent throughout the program. Teachers and administrators are conversant with the latest research and curriculum developments within and beyond bilingual education and apply findings to their own classroom.

If that sounds like a fairy tale impossibility in urban schools, it is because of the external demands that buffet and direct the deployment of teachers, administrators and resources for bilingual education, resulting in a short-changed, fragmented program directed by and accountable to administrators who are off-site. Bilingual education, in far too many schools, is effectively a segregated program for both staff and students.

A quality program cannot exist within a school without the full support and involvement of the on-site educational leader, the principal. A quality program cannot make the transition to becoming quality education without the active participation of the entire staff of the school: To provide a child with an exemplary year or two experience is only a piece of the patchwork. Administrators and teachers, bilingual, special education and regular education, have a responsibility to look to the entire design and examine the educational experience the school system is providing the child from entrance at age four or five to graduation from high school. Each piece is every educator’s responsibility.

Duckworth (1979) describes good education in this way:

What is the intellectual equivalent of building in breadth and depth? I think it is a matter of making connections: breadth could be thought of as the widely different spheres of experiences that can be related to one another; depth can be thought of as the many different kinds of connections that can be made among different facets of our experience.

Questions and ideas are central to this process. When Duckworth (1987), notes that good education cannot be rushed we may remind ourselves of the fallacy of externally prescribing a timetable for children to master a second language:

Exploring ideas can only be to the good, even if it takes time. Wrong ideas, moreover, can only be productive. Any corrected, wrong idea provides far more depth than if you never had a wrong idea to begin with. You master it much more thoroughly if you have considered the alternatives, tried to work it out in areas where it didn’t work, and figured out why it was that it didn’t work — all of which takes time.

While citing early childhood education, the following three components by Hall and Wortis (1990) of Literacy/Curriculum Connections can be applied as a benchmark to good education for every age,

including adults: developmentally appropriate practice, multicultural education and a whole-language theory. They feature “a firm belief in the efficacy of the acquisition learning model and the communal cooperative learning environment that supports it.” They define their terms in this way:

**Developmentally appropriate practice** emphasizes learning as an interactive process. Teachers observe and record each child’s special interests and the developmental process. The curriculum is then planned to be appropriate for the age span of the children within the group and is implemented with attention to the different needs, interests and developmental levels of the individual children. Teachers prepare the environment for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials. Through an integrated curriculum, all areas of a child’s development are addressed: physical, emotional, social and cognitive.

**Multicultural education** is inclusive rather than exclusive. It encompasses many dimensions of human difference including: culture, race, socioeconomic status, exceptional need, gender and sexual orientation. It affirms and validates each child’s culture and background. It provides for the growth of positive self-esteem among all children and guarantees that each child will feel successful. By providing all children equal opportunity to learn, multicultural education gives each child a chance to reach her/his full potential. The ultimate goal of multicultural education is to develop children’s abilities to function competently within multiple cultures.

**Whole language** is a theory about language, literacy and learning in general. The key premise is that babies, the world over, acquire a language through actually using it in meaningful contexts. The major assumption is that this model of acquisition through real use, not through practice exercises, is the best model for learning to read and write. In the classroom, reading and writing are done for real purposes. Language is considered a tool for making sense of something else. Subjects under study have prominence and provide the contexts for much of the reading and writing.

Clearly, high quality teachers and home-school collaboration are essential to all effective schools. What additional criteria should be considered in developing effective two-way bilingual programs? Lindholm (1987) of the Center for Language Education at the University of California, Los Angeles, suggests:

Programs must provide long-term treatment (four to six years), optimal input in two languages, focus on academic subjects, integration of language arts with curriculum, separation of languages for instruction, additive bilingual environment, balance of language groups, sufficient use of minority language, opportunities for speech production, administrative support and an empowerment objective of instruction.

Quality education encompasses a view of children as active and engaged learners, a view diametrically opposed to the philosophical underpinning of transitional bilingual education, which is “quick, compensatory and remedial education.” Those engaged in good education refuse to reduce their goals or methods to those prescribed from the outside, including the federal and state government. Good education makes its own way, based on the needs of students.



## Teacher Training

"I think the teacher's job is to raise questions about even such a simple right answer — to push it to its limits, to see where it holds up and where it does not hold up," Duckworth (1987) says.

The changes in state certification of teachers in Massachusetts hold many hopeful signs, including the elimination of education as a field of undergraduate study and replacing it with a liberal arts major which in most cases includes a foreign language requirement. However, there remains a gaping hole that may not be filled by individual schools of education graduate requirements. Regular education teachers in Massachusetts are not required to complete any courses for certification or continuing education that address the needs of limited-English-proficient students.

If we are to promote the notion of all teachers taking responsibility for the education of all students, then regular education teachers must be required to take courses in second-language acquisition and there must be incentives for all teachers to develop their own second-language capability. There is ample lip-service in education today for the value of intercultural training for teachers, yet such courses remain optional electives for entering the teaching profession. Students who seek out these courses already are motivated enough to realize they, as educators, have an expanded responsibility to assist children in affirming and celebrating their cultures. What about the education students who are not yet converted? What incentive is there for them to alter their ethnocentric view of teaching and learning?

Given secondary and higher education's poor track record of teaching English-dominant students to achieve oral and written fluency in a second language, we cannot expect a quick turn-around in an outdated system of foreign language instruction that produces such poor results, including among future teachers. Realistically, while graduate schools of education may have a foreign language prerequisite, students will require further study to approach fluency as bilingual teachers.

Nevertheless, every Massachusetts teacher should be required to complete a course, with a field experience, in intercultural training and second-language acquisition. English speakers who have struggled through high school and college Spanish — and still are not fluent — should have new insight into why mastering a second language has its own developmental timetable for children. Furthermore one child's timetable is often quite distinct from the next.

Similarly, the widely held practice in bilingual education of requiring all teachers, regardless of native- and second-language abilities, to teach in both languages should be challenged. In the move to school-based decision-making, the entire teaching staff of a school should work together to design a truly bilingual education program that uses teachers' strengths. For example, my own language instruction played to teachers' strengths. While all teachers could speak both Spanish and English, I learned English composition from a native English speaker and Spanish composition from a native Spanish speaker.

Barth (1990) notes that "in good schools, good thinking pervades the curriculum and decision-making." Good thinking is holistic. By putting bilingual teachers, special education teachers and regular education teachers in effect on three separate certification tracks, we have instituted separate standards and promoted fragmented thinking. To what extent does teacher preparation, including language ability in English and Spanish and knowledge of current learning theory and content areas, impact on students' achievement when enrolled in two-way bilingual programs? To what extent does it impact in transitional bilingual programs? Monolingual and bilingual teachers (as well as special education teachers, for there are a significant number of limited-English-proficient students enrolled, even over enrolled, in special education) are not adversaries but allies in this scenario, working together to educate all the children in their care.

Bilingual education has been shortchanged in two ways: Many bilingual teachers teach initially under waiver — an acknowledgment that either they are not yet fluent in two languages and/or they have not yet completed their professional training required for certification. Regular education teachers also have suffered from an inappropriate sorting and tracking within the profession. Many are ignorant of the most rudimentary knowledge of bilingual education as a field. Separate professional development,

if any at all, has been characteristic of bilingual, regular education and special education teachers with different administrators responsible for professional development design and programs. In the future, ongoing professional development must be at the core of a school system's values and action agenda. Examples include offering teachers a range of professional development, from one week mini-sabbaticals to model classrooms as pioneered in the Chelsea Public Schools during the 1989-1990 school year, to in-service and after-school and summer workshops and courses.

The mini-sabbatical model holds particular promise as an accelerated, intensive professional growth opportunity. Hosting teachers have a chance to reflect on their successful practices while visiting teachers can observe and work side-by-side a model practitioner in a real classroom setting. The 43 early-childhood Chelsea teachers who volunteered for the first round of mini-sabbaticals attested to the value of the experience for lifting morale as well.

### **Desegregation Goals and the Integrity of Bilingual Programs**

Traditionally, bilingual classes have been isolated from standard curriculum classes. Even with the move toward clustering at the middle and high schools, we still have the phrase "bilingual cluster." Despite a Chapter 71A mandate for integration of bilingual students in non-academic subject areas, this happens only sporadically.

Staking out the extreme positions — everything must be taught in the native language versus a quick total immersion into English — ill serves students' needs. Bridge building connects both sides and, in the process, creates new structures.

Brisk (1990) has outlined principles for the academic and social integration of bilingual students noting that "Education that isn't integrated can't be good education." These principles include the delivery of a full curriculum to students by clustering bilingual and monolingual classes. Brisk adds:

Bilingual students should receive at least one block in which all the teaching is in the native language... and should be in one class in which they will need to use English. Teachers should teach what they like and do best in the language that they do best. Integration should not be done just with students who are in the top English group. Monolingual personnel need to be trained to work with bilingual students. They need to understand that having bilingual students in their classes does not mean that they have to lower expectations or water down material (1990).

### **Accountability**

After 20 years of bilingual education, we know precious little about students' abilities to acquire two languages, because so few truly bilingual programs exist and because the federal government, with its increasingly restrictive vision of bilingual education, has failed to fund research and evaluation of these most promising programs. The Oyster School in Washington, D.C., for example, has been funded entirely by local funds since 1971 and a longitudinal study has never been funded by the federal government. While standardized tests have their own tyranny and obvious limitations, Edmonds (1981) in his research on Effective Schools pointed out their value as a benchmark for measuring individual schools' progress (as opposed to individual students' progress) over time. Clearly, they are a very flawed and limited benchmark, but they are something. The fact that we in Massachusetts have not yet created any testing instrument for children enrolled in bilingual education programs means we cannot judge how schools or programs, over time, are improving bilingual instruction.

The stepchild of public education in so many ways, testing and evaluation is the great uncharted water of bilingual education. Bilingual educators need immediate assistance here from educational researchers. What is possible and what works? What testing and evaluation tools assess school strengths and weaknesses? What tools assess individual students' progress and proficiency? What are we testing

to find out? How do a student's wrong answers illuminate our understanding of what a child knows? Is there a pattern to the wrong answers?

Gardner, in Frames of Mind: A Theory of Multiple Intelligences, (1983) is developing alternative assessments to uncover the many facets, from musical to kinesthetic, of any one child's intelligence. He defines linguistic intelligence is one of the major intelligences and gives four aspects:

- **Rhetorical:** The ability to use language to convince other individuals of a course of action;
- **The mnemonic potential of language:** The capacity to use this tool to help one remember information;
- **Its role in explanation:** Includes supplying metaphors that are crucial for launching and explaining a new scientific development;
- **The potential of language to explain its own activities:** To reflect upon language, to engage in "metalinguistic" analysis.

Gardner calls special attention to the development of the core operations of language which he believes all of us possess in significant degrees. These are:

a sensitivity to the meaning of words, whereby an individual appreciates the subtle shades of difference between spilling ink "intentionally," "deliberately," or "on purpose." A sensitivity to the order among words — the capacity to follow rules of grammar, and, on carefully selected occasions, to violate them. As a somewhat more sensory level — a sensitivity to the sounds, rhythms, inflections, and meters of words — that ability which can make even poetry in a foreign tongue beautiful to hear. And a sensitivity to the different functions of language — its potential to excite, convince, stimulate, convey information, or simply to please.

We need the assistance of researchers in designing new assessment tools that will uncover the different aspects of linguistic intelligence in two languages.



## FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN RESEARCH

Margaret Geller, astronomer and recent recipient of the MacArthur “genius” fellowship for her work mapping the universe, notes “You try to be as correct as you can, but to make advances in science you have to have a certain willingness to be wrong. “The hardest thing in science is to ask the question” (The Boston Globe, 1990). In research on bilingual education I would call for a boldness in asking questions in fresh ways. We must cast a wide net of questions beyond the scope of individual schools or programs.

We all speak glowingly about parent involvement, for example. What specific kinds of parent involvement and training positively impact on children learning in two languages? What kind of school governance has a positive impact on children learning in two languages? We often find that successful programs have been created by teachers and parents working together, often at odds with the school administration or in spite of them. Does the fact that a school or program has created itself — in effect, become a chartered effort with a distinct purpose — affect student achievement and learning in two languages? What role does parent choice play in having a positive impact on truly bilingual education?

Successful public education bilingual programs and schools are obvious through the most telling barometer of all: waiting lists. Parents vie to enroll their children. What factors inhibit and often prevent such successful bilingual programs from being replicated, despite their popularity? All of these questions demand research. We cannot afford to diminish ourselves by diminishing the scope of our research questions.

We must be willing to ask politically delicate questions. Is there a way to address issues of equity for bilingual and special needs students in a within-city-limits-school-choice plan that includes a chartering and decommissioning of schools mechanism? Such a chartering mechanism could do three things:

- allow successful programs to become full-fledged autonomous schools, perhaps sharing a site with other chartered schools;
- provide an incentive to teachers and parents to replicate popular and successful two-way bilingual schools, and
- reward rather than punish excellent two-way bilingual schools by giving them greater autonomy and control of their own resources.

Would a school decommissioning mechanism affect schools that currently refuse to provide truly bilingual education, despite the desire of their parents and needs of their students?

The currency of schools is time and resources, with the greatest resource being the human beings (students, families, staff) affiliated with the institution. An agenda for bilingual education in the next century entails questioning and chronicling every aspect of how time and resources within a program, a school, and a school system, are valued and used. Wherever children are not valued, bilingual education is not going to be valued either.

As bilingual, regular education and special needs teachers crisscross lines and develop a team approach to teaching, researchers must also step across the boundaries of disciplines to develop new research designs that have an overriding goal of supporting the education of every student.

Another major question researchers must vigorously address is how humans learn a second language, and its corollary, what role do age and development play in learning a second language. This question begs an earlier one: How do children learn a first language? Steven Pinker, Director of the Center for Cognitive Science at M.I.T. has called language “the jewel in the crown of cognition — it is what everyone wants to explain.”

Roger Brown, author of *A First Language*, a seminal work on language development in children, says the way children learn a first language is “approximately invariant across children learning the same language and, at a higher level of abstraction, across children learning any language.”

According to DeCuevas (1990):

Brown's pioneering work became the model for countless studies of child language that followed and gave rise to the flourishing field known as developmental psycholinguistics. By now so much has been written on language learning in children that no one could ever read it all, but in spite of all the work, no one has yet been able to explain fully how children learn their first language, although the pattern of development is well established for children learning English and a number of other languages as well.

Let us invite researchers to work with teachers, students and parents as allies in finding the answer to how people learn a second language. What can we learn from students and teachers who reflect on this question over time? Prof. Magdeline Lampert models the role of researcher as teacher/teacher as researcher; she teaches an elementary mathematics class every morning while also holding a teaching appointment at Michigan State University. Lampert asks her elementary students to write their thoughts on what they learned that week in mathematics. What did they understand? What are they working to understand? Is there a comparable rich field of longitudinal data from students of all ages reflecting on learning a second language? What about longitudinal reflections by teachers on teaching in two languages?

What other factors combined with instruction in the first language must we consider in program design? Researchers must examine systematically the identified facets of good education in the context of instruction in two languages.

Certainly a major area is curriculum development and resources. Why do we still have such a shortage of quality literature in Spanish by Latino authors for children K-12? Reading a Spanish translation of a children's classic is preferable to reading a Spanish translation of the balkanized basal reader; but why must teachers be faced with such a poverty of choices? Read Alice in Wonderland in the original English, and Platero y Yo in the original Spanish. Education means empowering our youngsters to meet the great authors face to face. Bilingual education means giving them the advantage of meeting the writers, poets, playwright and storytellers in their native tongues.

Ideas translate, but the rhythms and syncopations, the warmth and familiarity of colloquial expressions cannot. Each language plays its music on a different instrument. The notes may be the same, but the timbre of a piano has a resonance the harpsichord can never match. Children deserve the riches of literature in its original Spanish and English.

English and American children's literature has flowered in the past 100 years. There is not yet a comparable body of children's literature from Latin America, but there is a treasure house of legends, fables and myths to disseminate more widely. The poetry alone of Latin America suitable for children could fill volumes. What rich volumes they would be and how preferable to a basal translation from English of a poem of little literary value in its original tongue. How can researchers and teachers work together on the collection, publication and promotion of an expanding body of Children's Literature in Spanish?

Curriculum resources in Spanish, whether science, social studies, literature, music or mathematics, lag behind and when available, are often more expensive. We must find incentives and create opportunities, such as summer institutes, for teachers and educational researchers to work together in the development of state-of-the-art trade books, interdisciplinary kits, curriculum units and quality interdisciplinary children's magazines for classroom use. These would be comparable to **Cobblestone**, which focuses on U.S. history, **Faces** which focuses on Anthropology or **Calliope** which focuses on World History, all for students in grades 4-9. Our curriculum in public education is neither multi-cultural nor gender-balanced. It is up to us to join forces as researchers and educators to create the curriculum resources in Spanish that our children deserve.



Dworkin (1987) notes that "Despite the plethora of research devoted to the effects of teachers and schools upon student achievement, there appears to be almost no work which addresses the impact of teacher work commitment upon students." What difference does it make to Hispanic student achievement if it is the burned-out teacher who is assigned to teach our children? In a heavily tracked system, Hispanics are disproportionately relegated to the remedial and basic regular education courses once they are "mainstreamed" out of bilingual education. These courses remain low-status within schools and may even be assigned the least talented rather than most talented teachers.

Similarly, what impact does administrators' work commitment and attitude have on Hispanic student achievement. I have been touched this year as superintendent and the first Hispanic administrator in Chelsea, a school system which is 52 percent Hispanic, by the private expressions of support from students, staff and community in telling me what a difference my presence makes. "You can speak to us in Spanish," one mother gratefully acknowledged. "You show us our children can go far."

There has been a certain hesitancy on the part of educational researchers outside bilingual education to join with us in studying how we can all serve all children better. I extend an enthusiastic invitation to all educational researchers — whether studying cooperative learning, whole language, critical and creative thinking, school restructuring, parent involvement, school climate, early childhood education, middle schools, tracking, retention or curriculum development within any or across any discipline — to work with bilingual practitioners. We need each other.

The day must come when a state or bilingual conference is flooded with educators and researchers who traditionally have not attended because they had abdicated responsibility for the education of bilingual children to one particular group. The researchers and teachers of the future will present their shared findings of Brisk's bilingual education definition, "good education which happens to take place in two languages."

## DEVELOPING LINGUISTIC SENSITIVITY AND INTELLIGENCE IN TWO LANGUAGES

We return to our star-gazing student. How can public policy and research help this student get the quality teaching in two languages that she richly deserves? How can this student further develop and refine her linguistic intelligence in two languages? How can we provide incentives to teachers and administrators to create schools and programs where students can flourish in two languages? What real consequences should there be for schools that fail to educate our children?

There are schools, including the Rafael Hernandez in Boston, the Oyster School in Washington, D.C., and programs, including Project Amigos in Cambridge, that provide a rich learning environment that supports the development of truly bilingual linguistic intelligences. These efforts share the characteristic of a culture that promotes the continued adult development of linguistic intelligence, alternative assessment and teaching strategies by teachers which include a strong emphasis on providing children with ample “practice time” to use the languages in meaningful ways and educators’ willingness to expose themselves to public, parent and research scrutiny.

Researchers in the field of bilingual education and beyond have a unique role to play in advancing public policy. They can pose the unasked questions and collaborate closely with practitioners to uncover answers. By inviting the public, particularly parents, teachers and students, to assist in generating questions, researchers are more likely to maintain the connection between their initial purpose and ultimate outcome. By remembering the stargazer, and her striking linguistic intelligence, researchers will be emboldened to ask thorny and difficult questions for the sake of all children.

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